

Blockades & Protests: GAC update (Feb. 23)

From: "Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA" <sebastien.beaulieu@international.gc.ca>
To: *USS-DMA Advisors/Conseillers <d-uss-dmaadvisors@international.gc.ca>, *DMT-Policy/Politiques <d-dmt-policy@international.gc.ca>, *MINT-Dept Unit/Unité ministérielle <d-mint-dept-unit@international.gc.ca>, *MINA-Dept Unit/Unité ministérielle <d-mina-dept-unit@international.gc.ca>, "Hulan, Heidi -IFM" <heidi.hulan@international.gc.ca>, "Loken, Martin -WSHDC -GR" <martin.loken@international.gc.ca>, "Lorre, Anne-Tamara -WSHDC -GR" <anne-tamara.lorre@international.gc.ca>, "Baird, Katherine -WSHDC -DHOM/CDMA" <katherine.baird@international.gc.ca>, "McIntyre, Graeme -WSHDC -GR" <graeme.mcintyre@international.gc.ca>, "Bélanger, Jérôme -WSHDC -GR" <jerome.belanger@international.gc.ca>, "Grant, Heather -WSHDC -WS" <heather.grant@international.gc.ca>, "Barratt, Adam -WSHDC -WS" <adam.barratt@international.gc.ca>, "Layton, John -WSHDC -TD" <john.layton@international.gc.ca>, "Bourély, Nadia -WSHDC -TD" <nadia.bourelly@international.gc.ca>, "Kane, Lee -WSHDC -TD" <lee.kane@international.gc.ca>, "Nizman, Sara -LCF" <sara.nizman@international.gc.ca>, "Tan, Diana -WSHDC -PA" <diana.tan@international.gc.ca>, "Perkins, Kate -WSHDC -PA" <kate.perkins@international.gc.ca>, "Ballard, Julie -WSHDC -WS" <julie.ballard@international.gc.ca>, "Lambo, Pam -WSHDC -WS -PA" <pam.lambo@international.gc.ca>, "Dobner, Gallit -IOL" <gallit.dobner@international.gc.ca>, "Raja, Adnan -IOL" <adnan.raja@international.gc.ca>, "Tan, Diana -WSHDC -PA" <diana.tan@international.gc.ca>, "Thissen, Sonya -NMD" <sonya.thissen@international.gc.ca>, "LaTorre, Jason -STKHM -HOM/CDM" <jason.latorre@international.gc.ca>, "Drew-Watt, Julia -NMX -NMO" <julia.drew-watt@international.gc.ca>, "Pena, Patricia -POD" <patricia.pena@international.gc.ca>, "Cheung-Gertler, Jasmin -IRZ" <jasmin.cheung-gertler@international.gc.ca>, "McDonald, Lynn -PED" <lynn.mcdonald@international.gc.ca>, "Geislerova, Marketa -IOL" <marketa.geislerova@international.gc.ca>, "Godin, Catherine -IOD" <catherine.godin@international.gc.ca>, "Dobner, Gallit -IOL" <gallit.dobner@international.gc.ca>, "Raja, Adnan -IOL" <adnan.raja@international.gc.ca>, "Cesaratto, Sylvia -NDD" <sylvia.cesaratto@international.gc.ca>, "Cohen, Sara -NLD" <sara.cohen@international.gc.ca>, "Mason, Emma -NLG" <emma.mason@international.gc.ca>, "Adsett, Hugh -PRMOAS -HOM/CDM" <hugh.adsett@international.gc.ca>
Cc: "Grant, Michael -NGM" <michael.grant@international.gc.ca>, "Vanderloo, Caroline -NGM" <caroline.vanderloo@international.gc.ca>, "Walsh, Eric -NGD" <eric.walsh@international.gc.ca>, "Schmidt, Kelly -NGD" <kelly.schmidt@international.gc.ca>, "Coulombe, Evelyne -NGB" <evelyne.coulombe@international.gc.ca>, "Parsons, Alanna -NGB" <alanna.parsons@international.gc.ca>, "Denter, Christian -NGB" <christian.denter@international.gc.ca>, "Ramcharan, Lisette -NGQ" <lisette.ramcharan@international.gc.ca>, "Raiche, Vincent -NGQ" <vincent.raiche@international.gc.ca>, "Marshall, David -NGQ" <david.marshall@international.gc.ca>, "Dixon, Lucas -NGQ" <lucas.dixon@international.gc.ca>, "Lau, Meghan -STKHM -GR" <meghan.lau@international.gc.ca>, "LaTorre, Jason -STKHM -HOM/CDM" <jason.latorre@international.gc.ca>, "Lemay, Joanne -WLGTN -HOM/CDM"

<joanne.lemay@international.gc.ca>, "Wright, Lorenz -WLG TN -GR"
<lorenz.wright@international.gc.ca>, *NGA <d-gga@international.gc.ca>, *US-
HOM/CDM <d-us-hom-cdm@international.gc.ca>, *North America FPDS Managers
<d-northamericafpdsmanagers@international.gc.ca>, *North America-STC <d-
northamerica-stc@international.gc.ca>

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Attachments: US Media_Full Articles_Feb 22 afternoon.docx (17.64 kB); IB_WSHDC-#768030-v1-
2022-02-22 NEWS RELEASE_Sen_ Rick Scott_ TRUCKERS Act Will End Vaccine
Mandates for International Truck Drivers.DOCX (15.46 kB); ConvoyClipsFeb22-
22.docx (41.86 kB); Trucker Protest Rollup 1 (Feb 23).docx (35.02 kB); Truckers
protest international roll-up Feb 23.docx (34.08 kB)

Here's a GAC blockades daily roll-up. // Voici un aperçu de AMC sur les manifestations.
(DLUs : Please share with MINOs.)

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Prepared by NGA/Marc-André Pharand
With input from WSHDC/PA & US/Global mission network
Reviewed: NGD/E/Walsh; NGA/S.Beaulieu
Approved: NGM/M.Grant

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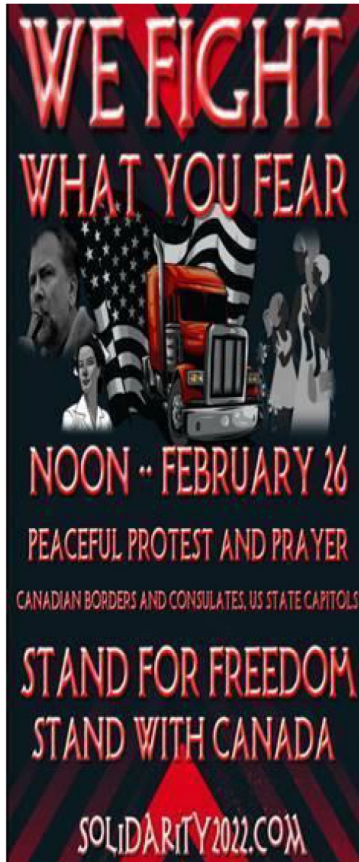
Key Developments of the Day

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- 1.~ **U.S. Congressional actions (Press release attached):** Florida's US Senator Rick Scott with Senators Marsha Blackburn (Tennessee), Mike Braun (Indiana), Kevin Cramer (North Dakota), Josh Hawley (Missouri), John Hoeven (North Dakota), Mike Lee (Utah), Roger Marshall (Kansas) and Marco Rubio (Florida) introduced the *Terminating Reckless and Unnecessary Checks Known to Erode Regular Shipping (TRUCKERS) Act*. The TRUCKERS Act would exempt non-U.S. citizen commercial truck drivers travelling from Canada or Mexico who are seeking to temporarily enter the United States for business through a land port of entry from proof of vaccination requirements. Florida Congressman Carlos Giménez will introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives this week.

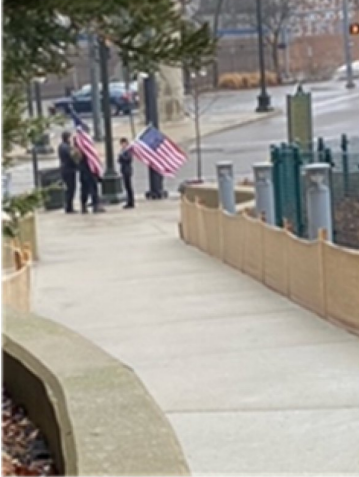
Some international focus and copycat convoys/protests

- 2.~ **Convoy to DC for March 1 State of the Union Address:** US media outlets are reporting that Defense Secretary Austin has approved the use of 400 DC National Guard members, as well as an additional 300 National Guard from "outside the District of Columbia" from this Saturday, February 26 through Monday, March 7. In continued coverage of potential DC-bound convoys from as far as California, some articles include comments by "extremist researchers" who say it is still "unclear" if and when the protests will happen, or whether this is "social media posturing".
- 3.~ **Call for US-wide protests Sat. Feb.26:** Our consulate general in Dallas is reporting a US-wide rallying call for protests this Saturday Feb.26 targeting "Canadian borders & consulates, and US state capitols".



- 4.~ **Denver (Feb 23):** Montana's Attorney General Austin Knudsen has launched a probe into GoFundMe on the premise that they may have violated Montana consumer protection laws by halting and redirecting funds meant to go to the Canadian protesters. DENVR has received a handful of communications from members of the public expressing concern about the Government of Canada's handling of the protests. So far it has been limited to four voicemails and an email, none of which included threatening language.
- 5.~ **Detroit (Feb 22):** A very small group of 5 demonstrators aligned with the "Freedom Convoy" protests, held a short protest action just outside the downtown Detroit location of DTROT mission. Protesters voiced their demands for an end to COVID-19 mandates. Despite messaging on social media aimed at attracting traditional media and political attention there has been no discernable amplification of the event. There was no impact on DTROT chancery and no interaction between protesters and Consulate staff. No other similar protests, aimed at targeting Canada, are known

to have taken place elsewhere in DTROT territory.



- 6.~ **Seattle (Feb. 22):** Over the past week, SEATL has received a dozen of voicemails and messages (letter, emails, social media) expressing concern over the Emergencies Act and/or accusing Canada of violation of human rights against protesters. None of those posed a security threat to the SEATL staff. On February 19, the Pacific Highway was closed once again on Saturday due to protests against vaccine mandates in Surrey B.C., impeding crossing to the U.S. for a number of hours.
- 7.~ **San Diego (Feb. 22):** SNDGO received emails and voicemails over the weekend about the convoy from local residents worrying about the Emergency Measures Act. One of the voicemail compares PM Trudeau actions related to the protests to Nazi Germany, noting that he will no longer visit or invest in Canada.
- 8.~ **New York (Feb. 22):** There was another protest in front of the Consulate building on Lexington Avenue. The protest, which lasted a few hours, was relatively small (40-50 participants), peaceful but quite noisy with horns and bells – chants of “We stand with Canada” and “Freedom” could be heard from 20th floor offices. Mission was in regular communication with NYPD and DSS – no incidents were reported.



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10. **Helsinki (Feb. 22):** A convoy was announced in Finland shortly after the creation of the Canadian one. HSNKI tracked it, but the event turned out to be a modest weekend affair, featuring minor traffic disruptions, some arrests for drunk and disorderly, and very little relationship to Canada. As in Canada, the protests grew (in themes, but not size) to include dissatisfaction with the government overall. At the same time, the size of the protest dwindled. While non-threatening, it involves a now-daily convoy of a few vehicles through central Helsinki, past the Embassy, to the Finnish Parliament. When passing the Embassy, the vehicles stop and play both the Canadian and Finnish national anthems. Alongside this, however, has been a growing and increasingly (highly) critical presence on social media of anti-Canadian sentiment, in Finnish. This criticism is now often joined by serving members of the Finnish Parliament belonging to the leading (opposition) populist party, and most recently has included swipes at both the PM and government by leaders of the party.



11. **Wellington, NZ (Feb. 23):** Media outlets have reported a calmer mood around the protest site today. There are noticeably fewer cars on the streets around the precinct, after police restricted access to new vehicles arriving. While there has been a reduction in cars, there is no notable reduction of tents on Parliament's lawn. Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said the focus for Police continues to be reducing disruption to Wellington residents, central city workers, and university students. Investigations are continuing to try to find who had sprayed a "stinging substance" at Police during confrontations on Tuesday. PM Ardern has noted her concern for police safety, but determined there is no need for now to declare a state of emergency or request NZ Defence Force assistance. Police Assistant Commissioner Richard Chambers confirmed Police would have a "close look" at the funding mechanisms being used to support the protest. WLGTVN has received a dozen emails and one letter over the past week from individuals who oppose the Government of Canada's actions on the protest.

Some social media comments over the past 24 hours:

- *Chinese Embassy in Canada:* “the Canadian police used pepper spray, stun grenades as well as batons to violently disperse “Freedom Convoy” demonstrators that had dominated downtown Ottawa”. Comments also made by senior officials in China.



- *Transportation Secretary Buttigieg:* I'm encouraged to see Canada taking steps to resolve the issue. I'm in frequent touch with automakers, Governors from border states, and my counterpart, the Canadian Transport Minister, to talk about getting that issue resolved and hopefully not having those problems going forward.
- *Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT):* I choose freedom and the right to petition government. I stand with the Canadian truckers. And I will protect the rights of those Utahns who choose to support their fight for freedom.
- *Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH-4):* What's happening in Canada shows how important it is for us to preserve freedom here in the United States.
- *Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO-3):* Trudeau is saying the truckers "seriously endanger the lives, health or safety of Canadians". Actually, Prime Minister Blackface, you are the danger.
- *Rep. Mark Green (R-TN-7):* Canada is the perfect example of what happens when you sacrifice freedom in order to have “more security.” The government will keep you safe, (as long as you continue to obey it).
- *Bruce A. Heyman (Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada):* What alternative universe have I awakened in where Republicans and @FoxNews continue to use the words like tyrant and tyranny for our ally and friend the Prime Minister of Canada and not for Putin after an invasion of Ukraine ?
- *Rep. Byron Donalds (R-FL):* I am proud to lead this effort in supporting the Freedom Convoy and demanding answers from both the American and Canadian Governments about the global economic impacts of the trucker protests resulting from the countries' overreaching vaccine mandates.

- ~ Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA-1): What's happening in Canada is an important reminder of how quickly government can permanently take away freedom if you let it. We can't let it happen in the United States.
- ~ Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL): Sen. Rubio, @SenRickScott, & colleagues introduced the TRUCKERS Act to eliminate the proof of vaccination requirement for international truck drivers seeking to temporarily enter the U.S. for business.

U.S. Media coverage

As 'Freedom Convoy' spinoffs pop up on social media, D.C. region braces

Washington Post, Ellie Silverman, 22 February 2022

Local and federal agencies are preparing for possible traffic disruptions in the D.C. region related to plans inspired by the self-styled "Freedom Convoy" that occupied downtown Ottawa for more than three weeks protesting vaccine mandates.

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National Guard assistance for DC truck convoys approved by Pentagon

Associated Press, Ashraf Khalil, 22 February 2022

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved requests for National Guard assistance with traffic flow in the nation's capital, in the face of planned protests against pandemic restrictions beginning next week.

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Trucker convoy organizer planning Pennsylvania-DC highway protest

CNN, 23 February 2022

The Pentagon has approved the deployment of 700 unarmed National Guard troops to the nation's capital as it prepares for trucker convoys that are planning protests against pandemic restrictions.

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U.S. truckers plan pandemic protest, inspired by Canadian counterparts

Reuters, Omar Younis, 23 February 2022

Taking a cue from demonstrations that paralyzed Canada's capital city for weeks, U.S. truckers on Wednesday plan to embark on a 2,500-mile (4,000-km) cross-country drive toward Washington D.C. to protest coronavirus restrictions.

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Former Canadian chief justice pens op-ed denouncing 'ugly side' of freedom in trucker protests

Fox News, Kristine Parks, 22 February 2022

After Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cracked down on the "Freedom Convoy" protesters last week by invoking the Emergencies Act, freezing bank accounts and making violent arrests, one of the country's former Supreme Court justices justified the extreme actions taken by the government in an op-ed published Tuesday.

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Ottawa convoy protest points to a failure of civic education in Canada

The Conversation, Eric Van Rythoven, February 22, 2022

With a downtown Ottawa clean-up continuing after police dispersed the protestors' occupation, it's important to look at what this episode tells us about how Canadians understand their civic institutions.

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How authorities are targeting the 'freedom convoy' money via the Emergencies Act

The Conversation, Patrick Leblond & Constansa Musu, February 22, 2022

The Canadian government gave itself extraordinary powers for a 30-day period to end the "freedom convoy" occupation of Ottawa by invoking the Emergencies Act.

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Lawmakers introduce bill to exempt Canadian and Mexican truckers from vaccine requirements

CDL Life, February 23, 2022

A group of Republican lawmakers introduced new legislation to eliminate COVID-19 vaccine requirements for cross-border truckers.

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U.S. truckers plan pandemic protest, inspired by Canadian counterparts

Reuters, Omar Younis, February 23 2022

Taking a cue from demonstrations that paralyzed Canada's capital city, Ottawa, for weeks, U.S. truckers on Wednesday plan to embark on a 2,500-mile (4,000-km) cross-country drive toward Washington to protest coronavirus restrictions.

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Column: Today's misleading headline — Truckers threaten Canada-U.S. relationship

Chicago Tribune, ARTHUR I. CYR, FEB 23, 2022

British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle greatly raised the prestige of the lowly detective story with his fictional alter ego Sherlock Holmes. One of Holmes' most brilliant insights concerned something that was not present. In "Silver Blaze," a dog did not bark. In a vexing case, what was unheard, what did not happen proved to be the crucial evidence. Likewise, Canada-United States relations remain quietly strong, despite media focus on current disruptions.

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Pentagon weighs request for D.C. National Guard help ahead of trucker protests

POLITICO - CONNOR O'BRIEN and NICHOLAS WU, February 22

The Pentagon said Tuesday it is considering a request to deploy the National Guard to provide assistance ahead of trucker protests that could halt traffic around the nation's capital as soon as this week. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said the department received a request for Guard support from the U.S. Capitol Police and the D.C. government, but had not yet decided to approve the request.

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DC prepares for possible US 'Freedom Convoy,' officials request National Guard troops - Tow trucks spotted near Washington, D.C.'s, National Mall

Fox News - Stephen Sorace, February 22

As the so-called Freedom Convoy that converged on Ottawa, Canada, last month was broken up by police over the weekend, Washington, D.C., appears to be preparing for thousands of truckers who plan to descend on the U.S. capital in the coming days. State and local law enforcement have called in support from the National Guard in anticipation of the massive convoy in the D.C. area between late February and late March, a government source told Fox News on Tuesday.

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Convoy Leader Denied Bail as Canadian Officials Warn of Unrest

Bloomberg - Brian Platt, February 22

A key organizer of the trucker protest that besieged Canada's capital city was denied bail Tuesday as police kept a strict checkpoint system in place to prevent demonstrators from retaking the downtown streets. Tamara Lich, who was the public face of the convoy and helped it crowdfund millions in donations, was rebuffed by an Ontario Superior Court judge who concluded she was evasive during her testimony and was likely to re-offend if released, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and other news outlets. She was arrested last Thursday and remains in detention on a charge of counseling to commit mischief.

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Trudeau's emergency powers upheld in Canada's House amid worries 'Freedom Convoy' could return

Washington Post, Amy Cheng, Feb 22

In a 185-to-151 vote Monday, Canada's House of Commons affirmed the use of special emergency powers invoked by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to quell weeks-long blockades by self-styled "Freedom Convoy" protesters.

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Will Canadian Democracy Survive Justin Trudeau?

His father invoked emergency powers in 1970—but that was against terrorists, not peaceful protesters
WSJ, Michael Taube, Feb 21

Canada's three-week-old Freedom Convoy is nearly over. The mostly peaceful protests against the Liberal government's vaccine mandate for truckers are being broken up by law enforcement.

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Maryland gubernatorial candidate has ties to trucker convoy protest

Fox5, Stephanie Ramirez, February 21

WASHINGTON - D.C. residents could potentially see around 1,000 to 3,000 protesters – connected to the trucker convoy – arrive in the District by next Tuesday. That's at least according to a permit request confirmed by the National Park Service (NPS).

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U.S. Government Workers Reportedly Among Those Donating to 'Freedom Convoy'

Newsweek, Erin Brady, Feb 21

As Americans continue to donate money to the Canadian Freedom Convoy, some donors might have influential ties to the U.S. government.

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Drivers preparing for truck convoys heading to D.C. ahead of State of the Union

Organizers said convoys will remain peaceful despite concerns of road shutdowns.

WUSA9, Matthew Torres, Tom Dempsey, Feb 21

WASHINGTON — Police in the District will soon deploy civil disturbance units in preparation for the possible trucker convoys that could cause gridlocks like the major blockades in Canada.

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Here's What We Know So Far About Possible Trucker Convoy Protests Coming To D.C. Soon

DCist, Feb 21

A number of groups are organizing convoys of truckers to drive to D.C. to stage protests against pandemic restrictions, similar to those that have recently paralyzed Ottawa, the Canadian capital. That convoy blocked a key border crossing between Ontario and Michigan.

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International coverage

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PM Jacinda Ardern on being verbally abused: 'I choose not to focus on what is often a small handful of people'

RNZ, 23 February 2022

After being verbally abused this afternoon, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says there have been people opposed to vaccinations ever since the campaign started.

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Protest funder working for university forced to close campus

RNZ, Hamish Cardwell, 23 February 2022

The chief executive of a company working with Victoria University of Wellington on a re-development is helping fund the very protest which has forced one of its campuses to close. The head of Red Stag, Marty Verry, said he made a "small donation" in a personal capacity, which he believes has been spent on toilet facilities.

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Jacinda Ardern 'concerned' for police safety, but says army is not required

Stuff.co.nz, Glenn McConnell, Feb 22 2022

After three police officers were hospitalised, when protesters threw a liquid at their faces, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says she called the police commissioner, fearing for his staff's safety.

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Key organiser of Canada truckers' protest denied bail day after lawmakers extend State of Emergency

Firstpost (India), February 22, 2022

The protest that ended on 20 February, paralysed the streets around Parliament in capital Ottawa for more than three weeks. The truckers were protesting against mandatory COVID vaccine pass to cross the US border. A judge has denied bail to one of the leading organizers behind protests against COVID-19 restrictions and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

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Marc-André Pharand

Analyste des politiques | Policy Analyst

Direction des relations avec les États-Unis | United States Relations Division

Bureau de la stratégie pour l'Amérique du Nord | North American Strategy Bureau

marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca

Cell: 343-549-4061

h